



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



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GOVERNOR

THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., Chairman

DATE: October 8, 2003

SUBJECT: Approval of Proposed *Michigan English Language Proficiency Standards* for Purposes of Public Comment

Section 3113 of Title III of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students, requires each State educational agency (SEA) that receives Title III funds to establish standards and objectives for raising the level of English proficiency that are derived from the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and that are aligned with the achievement of the challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards established for all students. In developing its English language proficiency standards, the SEA must consult with local educational agencies, education-related community groups and nonprofit organizations, parents, teachers, school administrators, and researchers.

During the 2002-03 school year, the Michigan Department of Education convened a Title III Advisory Group composed of diverse stakeholders to consult on standards and assessments for limited English proficient students in Michigan. The Title III Advisory Group completed a draft of the *Michigan English Language Proficiency Standards* in August 2003. This draft is provided in Attachment A. In crafting the proposed standards, the Advisory Group reviewed English language proficiency standards from other states, professional organizations, and researchers in the field. In addition, the Advisory Group ensured that the proposed standards were aligned with the Michigan English Language Arts Standards.

The proposed *Michigan English Language Proficiency Standards* provide a foundation for English language acquisition and the academic development of students who are identified as limited English proficient (LEP). The proposed standards are organized according to the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They are skill-based rather than grade-based, because LEP students may arrive at a school in any grade with varying levels of English language proficiency, ranging from no English to almost proficient. Each domain is divided into benchmarks and each benchmark is keyed to a four-level proficiency scale. In addition, each benchmark is also keyed to a grade-range expectation for students at that grade range.

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Proficiency under the proposed standards is defined as the ability to succeed in regular classes conducted in English without English language development support. The proposed *Michigan English Language Proficiency Standards* are designed to help LEP students develop English language proficiency and, at the same time, achieve academic standards so that they can lead productive and satisfying lives.

Attachment B is a plan to accept public comments on the proposed standards. After the period of public comment, the Department will reconvene the Title III Advisory Group to consider the comments. A recommendation to adopt final standards is anticipated for the March 2004 State Board of Education meeting.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the proposed *Michigan English Language Proficiency Standards* for purposes of public comment as described in the Superintendent's memorandum dated October 8, 2003.

Attachments

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